



THE SPELL OF SPRING

By JUN MINAMIKAWA

This is the second time we are publishing a translation of a modern Japanese short story, and once again it is about youth. While Masafumi Nakai's story in our May issue was about young high-school boys, this story deals with a young girl. The author himself is in his twenties and particularly popular with the younger generation in Japan.

The illustrations are by Noboru Matsumoto, one of the Shunyo-Kai (春陽會) group of foreign-style painters, who is well known for his landscapes.

We are indebted to Kurt Meissner, a German business man and scholar, for finding this story among the wealth of modern Japanese literature and for translating it. Mr. Meissner has been living in Japan for the last thirty-seven years and has published many books, the fruit of his tireless efforts to understand Japan and interpret it to the West.—K.M.



1.

THAT morning,
at a station of
Tokyo's sub-
urban railway,
Kiyo-ko saw a
poster which
attracted her. It
was an advertise-

ment for the hot-spring resorts of Izu. The green peninsula! The blue sea! Only two and a half hours to get there!

Memories that should have been painful returned to her as happy, pleasant memories.

"I must be out of danger. I believe I've got over my grief."

Kiyo-ko went back and looked at the poster more closely. For her, Izu was like a map on whose paths she had wandered. There was the orange-colored bus crawling over the mountain roads, there the orange plantations.

"I saw butterflies
When I came to Izu.
A pair of butterflies."

This was the clumsy *Haiku* poem Kiyo-ko had composed at that time. That was a whole year ago now and lay far back in the past.

"I didn't know you could write poetry too," Tamazuka had said and had laughed all over his round face.

Tamazuka was a director in the company in which Kiyo-ko had been employed at that time. Kiyo-ko knew quite well that he had a wife and children. When, in spite of this knowledge, she became friendly with him, she had not thought there would be any harm in it. After all, in matters of love one can never say that this man or that woman is bad. Even when the final result is immoral, during the time when everything is still in a state of flux a mysterious driving

force is active which cannot be got at with reason. We humans call this driving force "love," but that hackneyed word does not entirely explain it. It is rather as if we humans were being led like puppets by the threads of fate.

Kiyo-ko loved Tamazuka in all seriousness. Why should it be funny that Kiyo-ko, who was only twenty-five at that time, should love a man of fifty?

Tamazuka at first loved Kiyo-ko like a child, like his own daughter. Kiyo-ko's tragic origin had awakened this kind of love in his heart. Tamazuka was aware of her origin: he had learnt it from the family papers Kiyo-ko had had to submit when she applied for her position. Why must everything the authorities do always be so cruel, so pitiless? An illegitimate child! As a matter of principle, big companies do not care to take on female employees suffering from such a handicap. However, Kiyo-ko succeeded in passing the tests demanded by this company. Her six years of experience as a typist probably had something to do with it.

Tamazuka's strange love had begun right away. Kiyo-ko worked as a typist in Tamazuka's room. The love of the man of fifty was for Kiyo-ko, who had no home, something like the love of relatives—which she longed for. Kiyo-ko had unlimited confidence in Tamazuka. She was more inclined to despise the vague feelings that began to trouble her.

That which put an end to everything was the trip to Izu in the spring a year ago. This was when Kiyo-ko learnt how difficult a thing is friendship between man and woman.

Kiyo-ko gave notice in order to keep away from Tamazuka. Not that she had any feelings of anger or hostility toward him: the opposite was more likely to be true. It was only that she thought that she must not now travel the road her mother had taken.

Kiyo-ko felt the accursed blood of her forefathers in her own body. She wanted to put an end to this tragic line. So it came about that Kiyo-ko bravely decided to part from Tamazuka.

Tamazuka too, in spite of his fifty years, could think of no better solution. Faced with Kiyo-ko's firm determination he finally gave in.

"I had thought," he said, "that I could do more for you. I am sorry to seem so much of a coward. If there should ever be anything in your life which your little head cannot cope with, come to me, no matter when it may be!"

As a parting gift he had sent her a locket on a chain. Of course, the locket was empty.

With it came a letter: "May this locket one day contain a picture of the happiness you have chosen for yourself. And may this happiness then form the basis for the new line you dream of."

Kiyo-ko had then joined her new firm. It wasn't a big company, but the treatment there was good. She got along very nicely on her salary. Her skill at the typewriter was Kiyo-ko's best friend.

She had not once worn the chain with the locket.

2.

The poster of the Izu peninsula which Kiyo-ko had seen at the station exerted a strange influence on her all day long. When she was at the office and sat at her typewriter, and as long as her hands were busy, she worked mechanically, without feeling. But when she wasn't occupied, there was no escape: for Kiyo-ko the sunshine pouring in through the window was filled with the scent of Izu.

She wished to walk again the paths of Izu which she had walked last year.

Add to this that Kiyo-ko happened to be quite flush. A bonus of two months' salary had not been touched yet. But it was three days till Sunday And she had new shoes, too

The young clerk Kawase sat in the same room. A bachelor, of course. Kiyo-ko knew what he wanted. Sometimes he invited her to have supper with him on the way home at a restaurant on the Ginza.

Kiyo-ko might have been quite satisfied with this Kawase. But for the picture that was to go into the locket her ambition ran somewhat higher. Besides, Kawase knew nothing of her origin. And Kiyo-ko knew what an important part family documents played in getting married.

Some business papers were brought to her from Kawase. Between the papers lay a note:

What are you thinking of? You keep on looking out of the window. You have eyes that mislead other people. For you that may be advantageous, but for men they are very dangerous eyes. I too have been deceived by them. That can hardly be defended. You do not allow me to come a single step closer! May God have mercy on your wicked soul!

Kiyo-ko burst out laughing. "Kawase has apparently thought up a new strategy!"

So far Kawase had only once made advances, which Kiyo-ko had repulsed. Probably that had been sufficient for Kawase to change his tactics.

Unfortunately, Kiyo-ko had begun by knowing the beauty of the love of a mature man. That is what Tamazuka had meant to her. She was not only thinking of the happiness provided by material things and his position in life. Possibly it was the perfection and experience that goes with the age of fifty. A person who has experienced the beauty of maturity too early in life is unhappy. It is as if he had read the beautiful ending of a novel first.

Whether Kawase existed or not had hitherto really been of no importance to Kiyo-ko. Why was it that today of all days she did not feel indifferent toward him?

"I want to travel!
I want to go to Izu!

I want to walk along those paths just once again. All alone would be all right, too."

While Kiyo-ko was typing Kawase's letter, she seemed to hear in the rattling of the keys dancing under her fingertips the thunder of the train rolling along beside the sea of Manadzuru.

In between, she also typed an answer for Kawase:

It is a lovely day, isn't it? What should one do with such a beautiful day? I feel very much inclined to stay away from office tomorrow. I would like to take a little trip. The hot springs of Izu are only two and a half hours away. Isn't that wonderful? If you feel like it, how about going there together?

She put this note between the business papers that were to go back to Kawase, fastened them all neatly with a paper clip, and sent them over with a boy.

Kawase, who read the letter at his desk across the room, opened his eyes wide in astonishment. Then he looked across to Kiyo-ko in breathless suspense.

"Is this another of her bad jokes?" could be read in his eyes. Kiyo-ko thought it was too much trouble to smile back. Kawase got angry and turned his face away.

A boy was placing a cup of tea on Kiyo-ko's desk. He was a nice little chap, straight from school.

"Listen, I don't feel so good. I may stay away for the next few days. If I am not at the office tomorrow, please tell the boss that I am sick."

The boy was quite upset and looked at Kiyo-ko with big eyes.

"Oh, have you caught a cold?"

The clear, honest eyes of the boy embarrassed Kiyo-ko slightly.



"Yes, I think I have a temperature. Perhaps I am getting smallpox!"

"Really?"

"No, that was only a joke. You needn't worry." Kiyo-ko laughed as she said this, and now the boy, who had been quite upset, laughed too.

3.

On the following day Kiyo-ko's mood of the moment had become genuinely serious. When she woke up in the morning, the picture of the green hills and the blue sea of Izu danced so vividly before her eyes that she could hardly bear it. She lay lazing in bed till nine o'clock. She wanted to create outward circumstances which would make it impossible for her to go to office. Although her conscience pricked her a little for failing in her duty, Kiyo-ko nevertheless had considerable confidence with regard to her position in the firm. Her salary was higher than Kawase's. And there was not the slightest reason why one or two days' absence because of laziness should be held against her.

Whistling gaily, Kiyo-ko put her tooth-brush, toilet articles, and a few other necessary things into a little suitcase.

From the office of her apartment building she rang up her aunt. She had to do this, because her aunt's address was registered with the firm as her own residence.

"If they ring up from the office, please say that I'm sick. You see, I want to go away for a few days . . . No, there is nothing the matter with me. I just want to have a good rest and spoil myself a little."

Her aunt never said anything nasty about what Kiyo-ko did. Ever since Kiyo-ko had fled as a very young girl from the provinces to Tokyo, her aunt had known the whole tragic story so well that she never interfered.

Kiyo-ko began to whistle again.

The sun shone milky white. The weather was so marvellous that Kiyo-ko felt like taking off her spring coat.

When she arrived at the Tokyo station, she still had plenty of time to catch the 11.30 train to Numadzu. She glanced into the waitingroom.

She thought: "I wonder whether Kawase has come?" Of course, she had by no means counted on it. After all, they hadn't arranged anything or fixed any time.

It was quite natural for him not to be there. Doubtless he was at this moment sitting glued to his shabby desk, looking across to her abandoned typewriter. "Be a good boy and work hard! Pathetic little clerk!"

Nevertheless, the fact that her little jest of yesterday had had no effect ran the tiniest bit contrary to what Kiyo-ko had vaguely expected. On the other hand, she had, from the very beginning, wanted an untrammelled, lighthearted journey, all alone, without company.

She bought herself a second-class ticket, for she wanted to make the journey under conditions as nearly alike as possible to the journey last year with Tamazuka. While walking the same paths, she wanted to be undisturbed when observing her heart enjoying its memories. The turning of the wheels of the train, which had just started off, seemed to Kiyo-ko like the reeling off of an old film taken from her memory.

"I wonder how Tamazuka is getting on?" she thought.

The locket just peeped out of the neck of her dress.

4.

Suddenly the sea was there. Gay and azure blue—as at the time when heaven and earth were created.

Now Mount Fuji could be seen too.

The train went through a tunnel and over an iron bridge. With her whole being, Kiyo-ko savored her feelings, which were gradually approaching a climax.

Then, like a breath, came the thought of the sadness of traveling alone and threw a shadow over Kiyoko's heart.

But already there was a new burst of sunshine. The train had passed Manadzuru Point, and right beneath her eyes the brilliant coast line now spread out. The breakers foamed so white that it looked as if champagne had been poured out. Through the windows of the moving train the sea showed itself from all angles.

Yes, the sea was as vast as a generous, endless love.

I wonder where my mother is now, she who bore me? That unnatural mother who abandoned me and then hid herself? That silly, irresponsible mother who has become the object of all my hatred? Oh, if only once I could forgive you . . .

The train passed through the Tanna Tunnel and soon stopped at Mishima. Kiyoko changed trains and went on to within two stations of Shuzenji. From here there is a climb of about half a mile to the top of the mountain, where there is a hotel with a hot spring. It is not one of the famous spas of Izu, but it is a quiet spot which Kiyoko had discovered last year together with Tamazuka when they were studying a folder.

Kiyoko remembered the way very well. She climbed up the steep short cut to the left, thus avoiding the circuitous hotel road. Along the path stood mountain cherry trees, whose blossoms had already passed their zenith. As Kiyoko walked over the dead, fallen petals, she was conscious of a profound sadness in her heart. Last year, too, the cherry trees had been in bloom.

There had been a cemetery

over there. And nightingales had been singing . . .

At that time Tamazuka and Kiyoko had only wanted to take a look at the hotel, with the idea of going on to Shuzenji or Rendaiji if this place did not suit them. The delivery boy of a vegetable shop, whom they met on the way, had shown them the short cut. He was carrying a large basket on his back filled with cabbages, turnips, and other vegetables. He told them that the hotel was his most important customer. Almost pleadingly he asked Tamazuka at least to spend the night at the hotel. His naïve pleading had touched Tamazuka and Kiyoko.

On arriving at the top of the path, the visitor unexpectedly finds the gate of the spa hotel at his side. With its red roof, the hotel looks quite European from outside; but somehow it gives one the impression of a grand and yet, in some details, rustic, timeless building. There is a friendly, home-like atmosphere about it.

For a while Kiyoko stood alone in the deserted entrance hall in front of the office. Then a maid appeared, a face Kiyoko remembered having seen before.

"Oh, I know you, don't I?" Kiyoko said.

The maid looked more closely at Kiyoko: "Really? I don't quite know . . ."

"I should like to spend a night here. Are there any rooms free?"

"Oh yes, you can have a nice room. Please follow me."

They went past the lounge and the hot-spring baths. When the corridor made another turn, Kiyoko remembered the room they had had the year before.



"Last year," she said, "I had the room at the end of this corridor on the right. Is that room taken today?"

"That's number fifteen. At the corner, isn't it? That is just where I wanted to take you."

They looked at each other and laughed.

"Now I think I remember," said the girl. "Wasn't your husband with you that time?"

"Yes."

"We have so many guests that I sometimes do not recognize them at once. Are you alone today?"

"Yes, I'm alone. The man that time wasn't my husband. I've only come today because I wanted to recall old memories."

"Oh, I see."

The maid felt she had said the wrong thing. She swallowed with embarrassment and was silent.

It really was the same room. Kiyo-ko now remembered every detail. Below the east window, far below, is a cedar forest. "A year ago we heard nightingales sing early in the morning in that cedar forest," Kiyo-ko thought.

5.

Kiyo-ko sat in the large bathtub and stretched luxuriously. The whole north-east wall of the bathroom is one huge glass window. And right in the middle of it you see Mount Fuji; it reveals itself in all its majesty down to its very foot.

Till supper time, Kiyo-ko did not know what to do with herself in her loneliness. She sat down on a wicker chair and carefully polished her nails.

Suddenly there appeared before her eyes, quite unexpectedly, through a rift in her heart, Tamazuka's face. She felt how difficult it was to forget someone

toward whom she harbored no anger. Her necklace with the locket now seemed once more a heavy burden.

She took up the telephone which was in her room and ordered a small bottle of sake with her supper, although she did not think she was very likely to drink it.

Kiyo-ko liked her face as it really was, without make-up or powder. Now she stood or knelt over and over again before the long mirror. The hotel kimono suited her so well that one would hardly have thought that it was not her own. She was quite in love with her youthful appearance.



She would be able to work another five years. She did not count on any happiness that she might possibly find on her way. Should it be her fate to suffer great unhappiness—well, then she would proudly succumb to it. It was quite possible

that, in the end, she would suffer the same fate as her poor mother. But under no circumstances would she abandon her child. This was Kiyo-ko's determination, and in coming to it she did not forget Tamazuka and what he had said to her; on the contrary, she remembered it very well.

"It is fortunate that you know how to live by the work of your hands," Tamazuka had said. "How would it be if you devoted yourself entirely to your job? Efficient professional women like that are needed by society today. Women are capable of achieving equality with men. You must not stumble into some little love affair or marriage and be unhappy. After all, every semieducated girl who has learned no useful work can do that. It is my sincere desire that you may lead your life fearlessly and capably, and that I may be allowed throughout my lifetime to look after you and protect you. Please don't laugh at me, and

please don't say that everything I have said is only a product of my own selfishness!"

These were Tamazuka's words, which he had spoken like a solemn vow.

An unutterable sadness seized Kiyo-ko. It was not the sadness with which one faces a wrecked existence. Rather was it the sadness which rises from the innermost depths of the spirit. Similar to the way in which one feels religion. Grave, solemn, empty, and void, as if everything had just begun, and for that reason not at all conducive to weak tears.

Kiyo-ko thought: "Could it be the sadness of original sin?" It had been her own idea that she had to stay away from Tamazuka. But a kind of childish ecstasy had also had its part in this noble separation. And for reasons such as these she had wasted a whole year of her life!

The servant who brought in the little lacquer table with the supper kept her company till late in the evening.

"The sake has got quite cold. Shall I change it for some hot sake?" she asked.

"No thank you. I never intended to drink it anyway."

The girl stared inquisitively at the unknown, slightly strange guest.

"Tomorrow I want to go to Atami via Shuzenji and Itoh," said Kiyo-ko.

"It must be nice to travel around alone like that with a light heart. I envy you."

"Why, do I look happy?"

"Yes, of course you look happy. Anyone would say that you are happy."

Kiyo-ko thought that if people considered her happy anyway, she would make an effort to show a happy face. But she said to the girl:

"I am only traveling around here because I want to walk along the same paths again which I walked along before. I want to try to confirm my old memories."

"But that is to be envied too! I, for example, have not a single memory yet, I am sorry to say."

"Wasn't your name Yoshie-san?"

"Yes"

That night Kiyo-ko, against all expectation, could sleep with a quiet heart. She did not dream at all. And Kiyo-ko had looked forward specially to the dreams of this night

On the following morning Kiyo-ko was wakened by the sun shining into her eyes through the east window. The nightingales were singing in the forest. The locket on its chain, which Kiyo-ko had not taken off when she went to bed, had somehow slipped onto her back.

6.

Kiyo-ko took the tram via Ohito to Shuzenji. On the way she got off to walk along both banks of the Katsura River. Old and dirty bathhouses stand here one beside the other. Kiyo-ko was glad that she had no memory of spending a night at this place. While walking, she ate some oranges she had bought at the hotel in Ohito. The girls in the shooting galleries and souvenir shops on both sides of the street looked angrily at the ill-mannered young woman in foreign clothes.

She just managed to catch the bus going to Itoh as it was about to leave. All the seats were taken. However, the people in the last row, which was meant for five persons, squeezed together still more and made a little room for Kiyo-ko.

There was a strong smell of sake. Apparently Kiyo-ko had got onto a bus which was filled exclusively by the members of a club outing. They were men who, judging by their appearance, were probably small tradesmen from Numadzu and Shizuoka.

One of them started a conversation about the price of eggs. With a voice filled with sorrow he said that one could have made an easy profit by bringing raw eggs from Numadzu. A man with a disagreeable physiognomy spoke in a

surprisingly caressing voice about the women of Shuzenji. Feeling confident because of their majority, the men's conversation was altogether rather daring. But Kiyo-ko forgave them for this in her gentle mood.

When the bus reached the mountains, she even felt a sense of comradeship toward all the passengers. She offered her lighter to one man who had forgotten his matches.

"Ladies and gentlemen, permit me to offer you some explanations. Over here to the right you see something red. That is peach blossom."

Indeed, there were deep red peach blossoms flowering there. But the explanation had not been offered as usual by the bus girl: a member of the club outing had made use of a favorable moment to produce this little joke.

Everyone roared with laughter. Only the bus girl looked offended, as if her sacred position had been disgraced.

Soon, however, the real explanations began. Kiyo-ko listened with closed eyes. The hothouse atmosphere in the bus made her sleepy. It was only a light sleep, in which the voice of the bus girl still reached her ear. Nevertheless, Kiyo-ko slept almost half an hour.

She was suddenly woken by the car shaking violently. Before her eyes the deep blue sea of Izu lay spread out. The bus was now moving downhill after having crossed the pass.

"Now I feel easier," said one of the passengers. "I thought we were going on up and up, till we reached heaven."

Again everyone laughed. It was a joke that seemed to show a rather low level of intelligence, suited to the appearance of the man who had made it. But

just because the joke suited the man so well, it was especially effective.

The town of Itoh came in sight. Kiyo-ko saw orange plantations. "Those must be summer oranges," she thought.

She got off the bus in the main street of Itoh and looked for a restaurant where she could have a simple meal. But there was nothing to be found that suited Kiyo-ko's city taste. Although Itoh calls itself a "seaside resort," the atmosphere in its streets is only that of a small fishing town.

Without further hesitation Kiyo-ko went to the railway station, where she just managed to catch the 12.14 train to Atami. In Atami she had spent the second night with Tamazuka. She did not hesitate in which hotel to go. She went exactly by the plan which she had followed with Tamazuka.

7.

The Atami Hotel lies at a little distance from Atami itself. Kiyo-ko was given a Japanese room on the third

floor facing southeast. Where the lawn ends before your eyes, the sea begins. It was not the same room she had had with Tamazuka. But there was no doubt that the sea here and the garden were still the same.

Kiyo-ko had a quick plunge in the hot-spring bath and arrived in the dining room still in time for lunch. At table she sat opposite a young man who modestly introduced himself. He wore a well-cut Western suit. His card, which he shyly handed her, revealed that his name was Kariya and that he was a student of German literature at the Imperial University in Tokyo. He was probably at least a year younger than Kiyo-ko. He did not talk much, and out of his kind eyes looked a slightly timid heart, probably the result of a too careful upbringing.



During the fish course he said: "Fish with small bones are not my strong point. The bones often stick in my throat."

As clumsily as a child, he separated the meat from the bones before eating it.

"Are you still on vacation from university?"

"Yes, examination vacation. I intend to stay here another four or five days. How long do you expect to remain here?"

"I don't know yet. I always change my mind."

"It would be nice if you stayed a long time."

After lunch, Kiyo-ko withdrew to her room.

"I'm always down here in the lounge," said Kariya when she left, "I don't know what to do, I'm so bored. Please come back again!"

In her room, Kiyo-ko knelt down in the correct position, with both knees together, in front of the tea table. Somehow she had a funny feeling in her heart.

"I am upset," she told herself.

It was not Tamazuka. A face she had not thought of at all appeared before her eyes. It was Kawase.

Perhaps the youthfulness of Kariya, whom she had just met in the dining room, had brought about a curious combination of thought in Kiyo-ko. At any rate, she was seized by the desire to do something quite unreasonable, quite eccentric.

Evening was already closing in.

"This is impossible," thought Kiyo-ko. She sat down by the long mirror and pressed a damp towel against her cheeks.

"Perhaps I shall get over such wicked feelings if I talk to Kariya for a while."

When she came down into the lounge, Kariya was waiting, sitting on a sofa, his head resting in his hands. When he heard her footsteps, his face came alive with joyful expectation. The taciturn Kariya had suddenly become talkative. They talked about fishing and fishponds.

8.

When night fell, it was harder to bear than ever.

Kiyo-ko had had supper in her room. Kariya had asked her to go for a walk with him in the streets of Atami, but she had not accepted.

During the hours of solitude which she had hoped to have entirely to herself, Kiyo-ko found herself in the grip of a deep spiritual upheaval. She did not know the cause. Only one thing was sure: this deep-rooted, stubborn agitation flowed of itself from the very depths of Kiyo-ko's spirit. She felt as if the dark sea and the sky outside her windows were throwing themselves with all their power of seduction upon her and were taking possession of her whole body. In the distance, the lights of Atami were twinkling—devils and wicked demons seemed to be exchanging signals!

Kiyo-ko's twenty-six years, everything she had ever gone through, raged in her like a living thing, as if it had torn itself from its fetters.

And in the midst of it was Tamazuka's smile. A little smile, as if they were just passing each other in the street.

Kariya was there too.

And—shining with new splendor: Kawase's face!

It was already after half past nine. Kiyo-ko went with small, soft steps to the hotel desk. She handed in a telegram to Kawase:

Have you the courage? Am at Atami Hotel. Kiyo.

The eyes of the clerk twinkled when he read the text of the telegram. But Kiyo-ko succeeded in maintaining a cool and casual pose.

Her heart blazing, she lay down to sleep.

It would be about three hours before the telegraph messenger knocked at

the door of Kawase's apartment house. There would hardly be a train at that hour, would there? Kawase will therefore leave tomorrow by an early train.

But the real problem, the question which counted more than anything, was still not solved for Kiyo-ko.

It was a bad, restless night for her. She dreamed a great deal.

In the morning she woke up just as the window curtains were getting light. Perhaps it would be more honest to say that she had not slept at all.

The locket had slipped onto her back again.

She drew back the curtains. The milky sky and the sea lay before her.

She bathed in the hot-spring bath. No one had been there before her. Gradually Kiyo-ko regained her mental composure.

She made up her face just as she happened to like. It seemed to her as if she were putting on a suit of armor to protect herself against Kawase's attacks. Although she had called the enemy herself, she now felt that she had to tear herself out of his hands.

The sun rose higher. Kiyo-ko could hardly wait for the dining room to be opened. She walked around in the garden on the lawn. The sky was warm again today and the sea quiet.

Kariya came walking towards her to say good-morning. But Kiyo-ko looked at him so haughtily that he did not dare to approach any closer.

When she got to the hotel desk, she began to turn a few pages of the fat

guest-book. Perhaps she would find Tamazuka's entry of last year—a wish without sense or purpose.

But hardly had she turned four or five pages when she unexpectedly found Tamazuka's name.

"When was Mr. Tamazuka here?"

"Last week. He spent two nights here and returned then. Do you know Mr. Tamazuka? He often visits us."

"Was he alone?"

"He is always alone."

"Oh!"

Kiyo-ko breathed deeply and closed her eyes. Sweet, sad pictures, that her innermost heart was still longing for!

"Please order a car for me. I should like to leave right after breakfast."

"Didn't you send a telegram?"

"That does not matter. If the gentleman should come, please tell him that I had to return because of urgent business."

Kiyo-ko forgot to say good-by to Kariya.

In order to catch the next train to Tokyo she asked the driver to hurry. She was tossed back and forth on the seat of her car.

For no reason whatever her mind had been confused for three days. It was only Spring, Kiyo-ko believed, that had enticed her and made her its prisoner.

What was it Tamazuka had said? "Capably and—fearlessly," that was how she would lead her life.

This was Kiyo-ko's new vow.

